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PASTORAL LETTER

— OF —

His Grace the Archbishop

OF TORONTO,

ON PURGATORY.



TORONTO :

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1882.

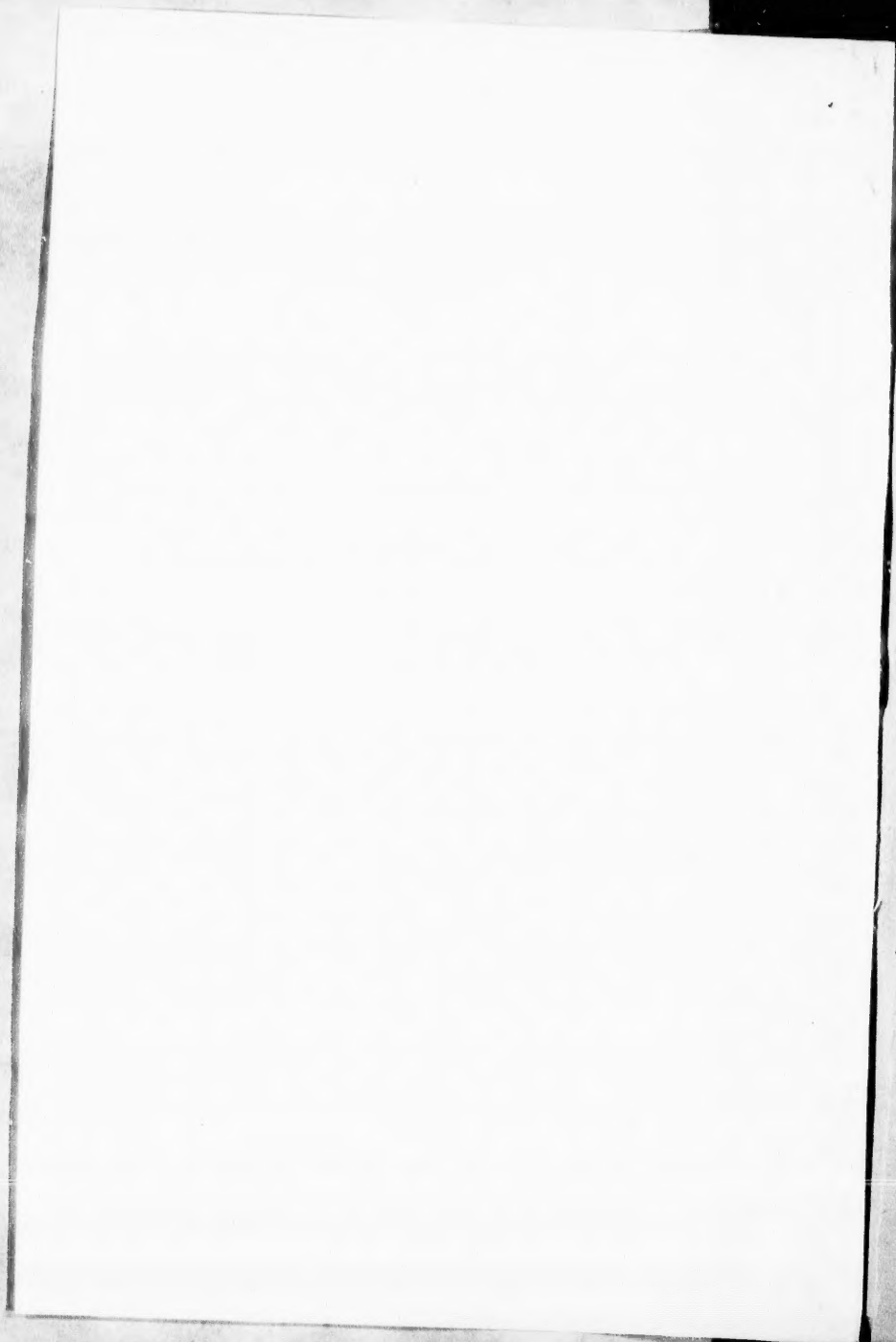
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## PASTORAL LETTER

—OF—

**His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto**  
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JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH, by the grace of God and the appointment of the Holy See, Archbishop of Toronto, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, etc., etc., etc.

*To the Venerable Clergy, Religious Communities, and Beloved People of the Laity, health and Benediction in the Lord.*

The infallible Church, the spouse of the Holy Ghost, the Pillar and Ground of truth and the true teacher of the doctrine of Christ, has in the distribution of her feasts and festivals set apart one day in the year, the ~~last~~<sup>second</sup> of November, in favor of the suffering souls in Purgatory. She calls on all her children to assemble around her sacred altars to assist and pray at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the deliverance from Purgatory of the souls of those who, whilst dying in peace with our Lord still had debts to pay to his infinite justice.

These debts were contracted by the commission of mortal sin, whose grievous guilt, though removed by the Sacrament of Penance, yet left on the soul a debt which was not sufficiently atoned for, or by the Commission of venial sin not sufficiently repented of. Purgatory is one of the great consoling doctrines

of the Church of Christ. Only the pure and perfect can enter heaven, and how few persons leave this earth of temptation, sin and trouble in that state of purity and perfection. If there were not a place of purification, how few could go straight to heaven. Nearly the whole human race would be deprived for all eternity of the beatific vision of God. God has chosen this way of exhibiting his justice and mercy. His justice by exacting the last particle of debt and His mercy by saving the poor repentant sinner. God rewards every one according to his works. Some are imperfect through want of pure intention, through carelessness, vanity, or other causes, like the hay and stubble adhering to gold and precious stones which dull their lustre.

"For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. Every man's work shall be manifest, for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."—1 Cor. 3, 11, 15.

The person who performed good works mixed up with imperfections of vanity and the like will be saved so as by fire. The fire of God's justice will purify the soul of its imperfections. And who shall be able to think of the day of His coming? And who shall stand to see Him? For He is like a refining fire, and like the fuller's herb. And he shall sit refining and cleansing the silver. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold and as silver, and they shall offer sacrifices to the Lord in justice."—Mal. 3. v. 2, 3.

"I will judge justice," saith the Lord, that is good actions,



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to see if they are perfect. "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.

Oh how few are perfect, and how few do penance in proportion to their sins. How few in their dealing with their fellow men, giving measure for measure, goods equal to the money paid for them or services equal to the pay received. How many fail in charity in words and actions, how many prayers said carelessly and without thought uttered even at the most solemn times. These will have to be repeated, as it were, in Purgatory. How many will suffer from their want of charity and mercy to the poor and failing to pay their just dues to God's Church for the spiritual favors they receive from it. If we give you," says St. Paul, "spiritual things, you should administer to us temporal things."

The guilt of mortal sin is so great that the eternal pains of hell are destined for its punishment, and when that awful crime is forgiven the penalty of satisfying for it some measure is so grave that the flames of Purgatory are made use of for a long or short time according to the gravity of the sin. A certain holy person said that some souls after a bad life will be in Purgatory until the day of judgment inasmuch as they have merely escaped hell by a death-bed repentance, and yet what a blessing to have escaped hell! All spiritual writers agree that the pains of Purgatory are intense, yet the souls are satisfied to suffer till the last debt is paid. They would not wish to enter heaven with stains on their souls. God in His great mercy has permitted some souls suffering in Purgatory to appear to friends on earth to solicit their prayers and masses, and to pay their debts. This, the lives of the saints, Ecclesiastical History at all times attest. In these days when faith is fading from some minds even in the Church, it behoves especially the Bishops to remind the faithful of their duties and obligations to their departed

friends. It is thought by some that an expensive funeral with its many carriages and a grand monument over the graves will satisfy all the requirements of family love and decency. Alas ! if the deceased's friends could only speak from their graves they would cry out and say, "All this worldly pageant and monuments only crush us. They only satisfy the vanity of the living but in no way alleviate our sufferings in Purgatory. Parents may cry out this to their children and the children to their parents. Where is true love ? Where is affection and gratitude ? Alas ! vanity has driven it from many hearts. Some worldly people will even permit themselves to say that appeals for the souls in Purgatory are only intended for the benefit of the Priests and the Priests unwilling to hear of such untrue and unkind remarks, will through human respect, be silent or through delicacy be slow to urge on the people the performance of so charitable and sacred a duty towards their deceased friends.

But the Bishops must from time to time remind the people of their duty towards God's servants suffering in Purgatory. In olden times when faith, love and affection were stronger than now, devotion towards the souls in Purgatory, showed itself in numerous foundations in favor of the souls in Purgatory. Churches and Canonries where masses were celebrated every day by canons and monks, benefices for the education of poor students, hospitals for the care of the sick, periodical distribution of alms to the poor, to have rosaries, prayers and pilgrimages made for the souls in Purgatory. All these have been swept away by the ruthless hand of the Civil Power wishing to reform the Church ; and even at the present day, when the Christian soul is about to appear before his Sovereign Judge, there are legal impediments in the way of his making by will donations for prayers or masses. Therefore, my dear people,

whilst you are well, make provision for your own soul ; do not entrust it to the care of others that cannot love you more than you love yourselves. One must be exceedingly pure to enter into the presence and company of the God of all purity and sanctity, to be the companion of the Immaculate Mother of God, and of all the saints and angels in Heaven.

The doctrine of Purgatory has been denied by the majority of the so-called Reformers, but nowadays, on account of its reasonableness it is rather accepted, and there are some who dare to deny the right of God to punish eternally, but will admit the existence of Purgatory. To the latter class we have nothing to say. God has sovereign rights, and He does not lose them by the whims and fancies of poor corrupted human nature. The existence of a third state or Purgatory is proved from many texts of Sacred Scripture, both in the New and Old Testaments. (II. Mark. xii., 4-7 3, 4-6.) "And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep in godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they be loosed from sins. In the New Testament we read in the Epistles of St. Peter, iii., 18-20, that Christ visited Limbo, a place in which just souls were detained on account of their incredulity, even before the deluge. "Because Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might offer us to God, being put to death in deed in the flesh, but enlivened in the Spirit. In which also coming he preached to those spirits that were in prison, which had been some time incredulous, when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was a building, wherein a few, that is, eight souls were

saved by water." (I. Peter, iii., 18-20.) It is unnecessary to re-quote the texts of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians. They amply prove the doctrine of Purgatory. This doctrine of Purgatory has always been taught in the Church, and handed down from Bishops and priests to their successors in the sacred ministry, and by the voice of the people. Stand fast, and hold the traditions you have learned, whether by word or by our Epistle. (2 Thess., 2, 14.) Now prayers and masses for the dead are to be found in every ancient liturgy of the Church. There is no oriental liturgy without prayers for those who have departed in peace. The Apostolic Constitutions—the most ancient and genuine work—speak largely of prayers for the dead.

Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin Fathers, who lived about the year 200, says: "We make yearly offerings or sacrifices for the dead. That a widow prays for the soul of her deceased husband, and begs repose for him and to have his company in the first resurrection, and offers sacrifices on the anniversary days of his death, for if she do not these things she has, in as much as in her lies, divorced him.

St. Cyprian speaks of the usual custom of celebrating sacrifices for every deceased christian.

St. Clement, of Alexandria, who lived in the year 200, says that by punishment after death men must expiate even the least sin before they can enter heaven.

St. Augustine mentions the vision that St. Perpetua had the night before her martyrdom—of her little brother who was suffering in Purgatory for some small fault, but the holy martyr prayed for him and afterwards saw him quite cheerful and happy.

St. Ephrem entreats this favor in his last will to offer prayers

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b.) It is unnecessary to his Epistle to the Corinthians of Purgatory. This is taught in the Church, priests to their successors of the people. Stand learned, whether by word Now prayers and masses ancient liturgy of the without prayers for those Apostolic Constitutions-- speak largely of prayers

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and sacrifices for him after his death, especially on the 30th day.

St. Gregory the Great mentions, that having ordered thirty masses to be said for the Monk Justus, he appeared to his Abbott after the last mass and said to him: "I was in pain but now I am well." But the limits of a letter will not permit us to cite other examples, even in our own day.

The Council of Trent, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, has made decrees on the subject which bind the consciences of the faithful. In the thirteenth Canon of the sixth Session, it decrees "that if any one should say that a repentant sinner, after having received the grace of justification, the punishment of eternal pains being remitted, has no temporary punishment to be suffered either in this life or in the next in Purgatory, before he can enter into the kingdom of God, let him be anathema."

Though King David was assured, after his sincere repentance, that his sin was forgiven, yet the Prophet told him that he had still to suffer by the death of his child.

In the 24th Session and 3rd Canon, the Holy Council defines, that the Sacrifice of the Mass is propitiatory both for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and for other necessities, according to Apostolic Traditions, and the Bishop, when he ordains, places the patena and chalice with the bread and wine in the hands of the young priest and says to him: "Receive the power to offer to God the sacrifice of the Mass as well for the living as for the dead in the name of the Lord. Amen."

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is therefore the most powerful means of relieving the souls in Purgatory; next is the fervent performance of the Stations of the Cross, to which so many indulgences are attached; then other indulgenced prayers, for

example the Rosary. Alms to the poor is another powerful means. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."

There is another means which our ancestors loved—to educate a student for the priesthood. St. Monica rejoiced at her death-bed that she had a son to remember her every day at the altar. If you have not a son you can adopt one or subscribe according to your means towards the Students Fund.

It is the custom in many places—and we wish that it should be introduced where it is not to receive the offerings of the people on All Soul's day, or the Sunday previous or subsequent and the proceeds to be computed and Masses offered up accordingly.

We attach the indulgences of the way of the Cross on certain crucifixes and thus enable persons, who cannot conveniently visit the Church to make the Stations there to gain the indulgences of the Stations by reciting fourteen Our Fathers and Hail Mary; with a Glory to the Father, etc., for each Station and five Our Father's and Hail Mary's in honor of the five Adorable Wounds, with one for the intentions of the Pope for the conversion of sinners.

There are religious congregations and pious associations especially devoted to the relief of the souls in Purgatory. St. Vincent de Paul ordered the priests of his congregation never to go to meals without first saying the De-profundis for the souls in Purgatory. The Church ends all the prayers of the divine office with "May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace." One may turn away with a sad thought, from a tomb on which is not engraved "May he rest in peace," or on which a cross—the emblem of our hope in God and in a happy resurrection—does not figure.

We exhort you, beloved children in Christ, to entertain an earnest charity towards the souls in Purgatory. You loved



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them during life; do not let it be said "out of sight, out of mind." Love them in death or living and earnestly wishing to go to God. This charity will greatly help yourselves. If a cup of cold water given to a servant of God will not go without its reward, how much more a cup of celestial grace, that will shorten the time in the flames of Purgatory of a soul that most ardently wishes to go to God, who desires it himself with great love, and will reward those who hasten the exile of his dear servants. Those, says St. Alphonsus, who succor the souls in Purgatory, will be succored in turn by the gratitude of those whom they have relieved, and who enjoy sooner by the prayers the beatific vision of God.

This pastoral will be read in all the Churches of the Diocese and Religious Communities, whole or in part, the first Sunday after its reception.

† JOHN JOSEPH,  
*Archbishop of Toronto.*

Given at St. Michael's Palace,  
25th day of October, 1882.

By order of His Grace the Archbishop,

J. J. McCANN,  
*Chancellor.*